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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000722

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [XF](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: HAMAS -- TURKS DESCRIBE PLANNED MEETINGS IN ANKARA

REFS: A. DAVID GREENE EMAIL 2/15/06

[1](#)B. MATT BRYZA EMAIL 1/16/06

[1](#)1. (c) Summary: Turkey will host probably two meetings with Hamas on February 16, according to two senior government officials. One will be at the Deputy Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs level and will take place over lunch at a government guesthouse. A second meeting is likely follow between unspecified political figures at offices of Turkey,s ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). In conversations early February 16 with Ambassador, these officials stressed that Turkey will deliver a very tough message and suggested the decision to receive Hamas followed an appeal by Abu Mazen. Ambassador expressed dismay at Turkey,s lack of candor with us on this matter, repeated the themes struck February 15 with Turkish Ambassador to the US Sensoy by NEA A/S Welch and EUR DAS Bryza (refs), and urged that Turkey be unequivocal both directly with Hamas and in describing its discussions to the media. At about 11:30 Ankara time today, the Turkish MFA announced that a Hamas delegationm, headed by Khalid Mishal is here for meetings. End Summary.

Prime Ministry  
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[1](#)2. (c) Early February 16, Ambassador followed up ref discussions in Washington with PM Erdogan,s foreign policy advisor Ahmet Davutoglu. The latter said Hamas had made several requests to talk with Turkey, including because its leaders &greatly respect8 Erdogan. Turkey had been reluctant. In a conversation last week with Erdogan, Abu Mazen appealed for a meeting with Hamas to help put pressure on it, and Abu Mazen repeated the appeal to the prime minister on February 15. This led to Turkey,s decision to receive Hamas, for which Abu Mazen was &grateful,8 Davutoglu maintained, and Turkey will try to use this opportunity to support Abu Mazen and moderation in the Palestinian community. Its message will be clear and consistent with what the US, Israel and the Quartet are seeking: Hamas must renounce terrorism, recognize the right of Israel to exist, and respect commitments the PA has made. Hamas has started the transition from terror toward becoming a political party. Turkey will talk, as a democratic state, about what is needed to complete that transition and make clear that without further transformation, Hamas will not succeed or be accepted. Turkey concluded it will be better to influence Hamas rather than push it toward greater radicalism and into Syrian and Iranian hands.

[1](#)3. (c) Davutoglu was deliberately vague on the level at which Turkey would receive Hamas. He said a political meeting would depend on how the foreign ministry session goes, but clearly declined to exclude the possibility that this might be with the prime minister or foreign minister. Any such meeting would be at AKP offices (not in government facilities) in recognition of the reality that Hamas is a political party that just won a democratic election in the Palestinian territories. There would be no joint press availability with Hamas; all the meetings here will be closed to the media, and the government will attempt to downplay the event publicly. Davutoglu agreed it is likely that Hamas will speak to the press here itself.

Foreign Ministry  
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[1](#)4. (c) Ambassador also spoke early February 16 with MFA Undersecretary Ali Tuygan on the matter. Tuygan defended the abrupt notification we had received about the Hamas meetings by saying that as soon as the decision to meet was made, Turkey informed Israel and the United States. He said that Turkey had not invited Hamas; its leaders themselves decided to come. The government looked at the broad context of problems all around Turkey ) Iraq, Iran, Syria and the Middle East. It felt the responsible thing is to try to act positively and itself deliver directly to Hamas clear messages on what it must do to be recognized as legitimate democratic leaders. Turkey,s message would be that Hamas must renounce violence, respect Israel,s right to exist and respect the Road Map, and Turkey would make clear that without these actions, there will be no way out for Hamas or the Palestinian people.

[1](#)5. (c) Tuygan said that Deputy Undersecretary for Bilateral Affairs Uzumcu, a former Turkish Ambassador to Israel, will &probably8 be the MFA,s principal with Hamas. He expected

a follow-on meeting with political figures connected with the prime minister,s office, but did not know the details.

16. (c) With both Davutoglu and Tuygan, Ambassador repeated A/S Welch,s comments regarding the level at which Hamas is received and the key messages it must hear. He expressed dismay that we were abruptly informed about this meeting after days of public and private denials here and in Washington. This lack of openness was a setback for the kind of improved consultation and dialogue that our countries have been working on for the past 7-8 months. Ambassador also noted that just as Turkey is extremely sensitive about the PKK, so Israel and the United States are sensitive about Hamas. The individuals Turkey would be meeting with are known terrorists bent on the destruction of Israel. Not even the PKK wants that for Turkey. Although the analogy might be unfair and not entirely appropriate, Washington will contrast the high level at which Hamas is received here with the fit Turkey had over a meeting that a low level State Department official had with a visiting Turkish mayor who has expressed sympathies for the PKK and what it represents. Ambassador urged that Turkey think very carefully about the messages it would be sending. At a minimum, it should be unequivocal with Hamas and be equally so in public. Both Davutoglu and Tuygan were defensive on the PKK analogy, but took the point.

17. (c) Ambassador debriefed Israeli Ambassador Avivi on these discussions. Avivi said that FM Gul and FM Livni spoke late February 15 at Gul,s initiative. Gul advised that Hamas would be received in a very tough way and that Turkey would deliver a strict message. Gul insisted that Turkey would be very clear on terrorism, the right of Israel to exist and the need to honor existing PA commitments and said the future will show that Turkey,s effort was constructive.

18. (c) Comment: It is clear that this Hamas meeting was arranged strictly through prime ministry channels and not the foreign ministry, which has been left backpedaling. Ambassador and visiting US IAEA PermRep Schulte will meet with Davutoglu later today on Iran, and Ambassador will take advantage of this further to stress Washington,s dismay at the lack of consultation and the need for extremely clear and careful public and private statements. End Comment.  
WILSON